

Double Possessive Constructions in Bosnian

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the colloquial constructions in Bosnian of the type "žena mi u mene" ('this wife of mine') that we posit to be instances of the Double Possessive Construction (DPC). Such constructions in Bosnian are both stylistically and regionally marked, somewhat archaic and typically used to express inalienable possession, i.e. possession entailing kinship and familiar objects (e.g. 'daughter', 'car', etc.). This construction has been overlooked by both formal linguistic literature and by traditional prescriptive grammars of Bosnian. This paper in turn assumes a descriptive approach to this issue and the analysis of the phenomenon of double possessive constructions in Bosnian is done within the framework of generative grammar.

In order to demonstrate the characteristics of this construction, including the restrictions that apply to this phrase, we will also compare it to the English double genitive constructions, also frequently referred to as double possessive constructions. The paper also presents the results of a small-scale survey of native speakers of Bosnian about their native speaker intuitions regarding the (un)acceptability of the word order permutations in the double possessive construction in Bosnian.